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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 271st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 6 May 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of the Rapporteur of the Committee

2. **The Chairman** said that Mr. Bazan (Malta), the former Permanent Representative of Malta and Rapporteur of the Committee, had left New York in March 2003 to take up a new assignment. He welcomed Mr. Camilleri, the new Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, and nominated him for the office of Rapporteur.

3. *Mr. Camilleri (Malta) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

4. **Mr. Camilleri** (Malta), Rapporteur, said that it was the third time that he would be directly involved in the Committee's work and the second time as Rapporteur. Malta would continue to contribute to the efforts aimed at enabling the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights. The Committee's task had been and continued to be to promote those rights with all the persuasiveness available to the international community. Despite many setbacks, important progress had been achieved in the universal recognition of the basic rights of the Palestinian people to a State of its own. Recent developments had opened a window of opportunity for peaceful progress on the question of Palestine. However, the optimism generated as a result should be tempered with caution.

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

5. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that the Quartet had formally introduced the three-phased road map to the Israeli and Palestinian sides and to other parties involved in the Middle East peace process. The road map was aimed at ending all violence, military attacks and acts of terror as well as achieving a final settlement based on a two-State solution by 2005.

6. In the first phase, both sides must issue unequivocal statements. Palestine would reiterate Israel's right to exist in peace and security, call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to end armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis everywhere and call for all official Palestinian institutions to end incitement against Israel. Israel, for its part, had to affirm its commitment to the vision of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State living in peace and security alongside Israel, as requested by President Bush, and call for an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere. Furthermore, all official Israeli institutions would end incitement against Palestinians.

7. The Palestinian side had unequivocally accepted the road map. Regrettably, Israel appeared reluctant to do so. He hoped that discussions and developments in the coming weeks would lead to an appropriate beginning of implementation, rather than provide a cover for further Israeli tactical positions to bury the road map, as had been the case in the past. He was not very optimistic, however. Such pessimism was borne out by the fact that just a few hours after the formal presentation of the road map, the Israeli occupying forces had staged an offensive with tanks and helicopter gunships against a neighbourhood in Gaza City, killing 13 Palestinians, including a two-year-old boy. Furthermore, current political statements by Israeli officials clearly showed an unwillingness to proceed with implementation of the road map.

8. He reiterated Palestine's acceptance of the document and its willingness to proceed with its implementation, stressing that it should not be renegotiated. In that regard, he called on the international community to apply the necessary pressure so as to ensure immediate and faithful adherence to the content of the road map. Referring to the ongoing attempts by the Security Council to adopt a presidential statement in that regard, he noted that the wording of the resolutions produced thus far was weak, neither providing for necessary support nor calling for the actual implementation of the road map. His delegation was hopeful that the Council would adopt a more coherent, and forceful position that would send the correct signal to the two parties.

9. Prior to the formal presentation of the road map, Palestinian officials had taken several additional steps to restructure several institutions in the Palestinian Authority, including the establishment of a new post of Prime Minister following the amendment of the Palestinian Basic Law. Mahmoud Abbas, the first Prime Minister appointed by the President of the Palestinian Authority, had presented his new cabinet,

which had been approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council.

10. Those steps should help to push the process forward. However, the task had not been easy, as the Palestinians functioned under Israeli occupation and oppression. The crux of the matter in the Middle East remained the Israeli Government's refusal to accept the internationally adopted parameters for a political settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to end the occupation of Arab land, and to allow the establishment of a Palestinian State on the territory that was occupied in 1967, including east Jerusalem. Without a clear change in that basic position, no effort or road map could lead to the conclusion of a comprehensive and final peace in the Middle East.

11. **The Chairman** said that only serious and determined efforts by the Quartet and the international community, especially its most powerful and influential members, would turn the road map into a peace process. He then read out the text of a proposed statement to the press expressing the Committee's support for the road map:

> "The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People welcomes the formal presentation on 30 April 2003 of 'A Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', as well as other important developments of recent weeks, notably the confirmation by the Palestinian Legislative Council of the new Palestinian Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas. For many months, the Quartet of international mediators — the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations — has been intensively engaged with the Israelis, Palestinians and others with a view to drafting a plan that would realize the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security by 2005.
>
> "In this regard, the Committee stresses the need for both sides to accept and fully comply with the road map, begin its implementation without delay, and continue to cooperate with members of the Quartet and other facilitators. Our Committee, for its part, supports the parties in this historic undertaking aimed at bringing peace to the region on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), agreements signed previously, and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit.
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> "The Committee also appeals to the Security Council to express its support for the road map and remain fully engaged on the issue."

He took it that the Committee wished to approve the statement.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **Mr. Farhadi** (Afghanistan) said that his delegation welcomed the press statement, as the Committee's acceptance of the road map was essential in moving the process forward. Moreover, his delegation especially welcomed the election of the representative of Malta to the post of Rapporteur. Malta would accede to full membership in the European Union in the very near future, thus achieving the goal of participation by a member of the European Union in the work of the Committee.

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People (15-16 July) and Consultations with civil society organizations, 16 July 2003, United Nations Office at Geneva

14. **The Chairman** drew attention to the provisional programme of work for the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People and the consultations with civil society organizations, to be held in Geneva on 15 and 16 July 2003, as contained in Working Paper No. 2, which had been circulated to members. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme for the two events.

15. *It was so decided.*

16. **The Chairman** said that the Committee delegation to those events would be composed of the representatives of Cuba and Afghanistan, Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, the representative of Malta, Rapporteur, the Observer for Palestine and himself.

Accreditation of civil society organizations with the Committee

17. **The Chairman** drew attention to Working Paper No. 3, which contained the applications from 12 non-governmental organizations that had expressed the

wish to be accredited with the Committee. The Bureau of the Committee had reviewed the applications and had concluded that they were recognized local, national or international non-profit organizations. They had declared their support for the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily its right to self-determination. They had also demonstrated that they had programmes in support of the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the Bureau suggested that they should be accredited.

18. He took it that the Committee approved the applications before it and decided to accredit those organizations.

19. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.